

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Information Disclosure Statement

The Applicants are re-submitting the information disclosure statement filed on 11/28/00 along with copies of the Foreign Patent Documents that are requested in paragraph 2 of the Detailed Office Action. The Foreign Documents enclosed are EP0439926A and U.S. 5,752,161 which is the equivalent to PCT publication number WO95/08875.

Amendments

The Applicants have amended claims 5, 11, 14-15, 19, 21, 27-28, 30-31; claims 1-4, 13, 20, and 29 have been cancelled and claims 5-12, 14-19, 21-28, and 30-35 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Objections

Claims 2, 3, 14 and 30 are objected to because of informalities. The informalities of 2 and 3 have been corrected. Claims 14 and 30 have been amended to include the tandem free operation negotiations and support for the amendment is found on page 12, lines 7-20 to page 13, lines 1-12.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 15-17 and 31-33 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten or amended to include the limitations of the base and any intervening claim. Claim 4 has been cancelled and the limitations have been incorporated with the allowable limitations of claim 15. Additional limitations from claims 11 and 13 have also been incorporated into claim 15. Claims 20 and 29 have been canceled and the limitations have been incorporated with the allowable limitations of claim 31. Additional limitations from claims 27, 28 and 30 have also been incorporated into claim 31. Amended claims 15 and 31

are now independent. The Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments have placed the claims in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,570,871 issued to Schneider. Claims 1-3 have been canceled rendering the rejection of these claims moot.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 4-6, 19-22 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider (US 6,570,871, hereinafter Schneider) and further in view of Forslow (US 6,608,832, hereinafter Forslow). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims. T

The cancellation of claims 4 and 20 renders the rejection of these two claims moot. Claims 5-6, and 19 now depend from amended independent claim 15 and claims 21-22 and 35 depend from amended claim 31, both claims 15 and 31 containing allowable subject matter. The dependent claims also contain the same allowable subject matter as the amended independent claims. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5-6, 19, and 21-22 and 25.

Claims 7-10, 18, 23-26 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Forslow and further in view of Farris *et al.* (US 5,881,131, hereinafter Farris). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims.

Claims 7-10, and 18 now depend directly or indirectly from amended claim 15 and claims 23-26 and 34 depend from amended claim 31, both claims 15 and 31 containing allowable subject matter. The dependent claims also contain the same allowable subject matter as the amended independent claims. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 7-10, 18, 23-26 and 34.

Claims 11-13 and 27-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Forslow in view of Farris and further in view of Thomas (US 6,421,339, hereinafter Thomas). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims.

The cancellation of claims 13 and 29 renders the rejection of claims 13 and 29 moot. Claims 11-12 now depend from amended claim 15 and claims 27-28 depend from amended claim 31, both claims 15 and 31 containing allowable subject matter. The dependent claims also contain the same allowable subject matter as the amended independent claims. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5-6, 19, and 21-22 and 25.

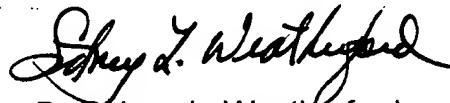
Claims 14 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Forslow, Farris and further in view of Thomas and further in view of Aravamudan *et al.* (US 6,567,398, hereinafter Aravamudan) The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims. Claims 14 and 30 now depend from amended claims 15 and 31, both of which contain allowable subject matter. The dependent claims also contain the same allowable subject matter as the amended independent claims. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5-6, 19, and 21-22 and 25.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for Claims 5-12, 14-19, 21-28, and 30-35.

The Applicants request a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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